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My Climbing Adventures in Four Continents. By Samuel Turner. x and 283 pp. Illustrations, appendix and index. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1911. 9 x 6.

A fascinating account of climbing on many noted mountains, Mount Blanc and the Matterhorn in Europe, the Altai in Asia, Mount Cook in New Zealand, and Aconcagua in South America. In addition, and fully as interesting, are the records of rock climbs in England, where feats of great difficulty, but without the complications of snow, ice and intense cold, were successfully accomplished. The author began his work in the Alps but soon turned his attention to other mountain peaks. The trial of Belukha of the Altai group during the winter season reads like an extremely hazardous if not foolhardy attempt and somewhat belies the author's insistence on carefulness with which the volume closes. In addition to the extreme cold, this peak was attempted without a base of supplies, the assistants refusing to advance, and, alone, the writer doggedly pushed on until, stiff with cold, sick, with eyes practically closed by inflammation, a mis-step nearly swept him down the mountain side in an avalanche, and the mountain was left, unconquered.

Quite a different story is the chapter on the first and only traverse of Mount Cook. The beginning of the climb was made under favorable circumstances—all the aggravating and strength-consuming preparation experienced in Siberia was wanting—and with three companions, this famous mountaineer successfully went over the summit of Cook. The climb was, of course, extremely dangerous, and the descent on the icy slope was painful, but in this instance Turner exhibited the most painstaking care without which the slope could not have been conquered.

The writer speaks modestly of his work as an author, being, as he says, "a commercial man, not a literary man"; but he may well be proud of his work as a climber, and "this plain, uncolored narrative" has for the person interested in mountains much that is worth reading. R. M. Brown.

Le Ciel et l'Atmosphère. Par Louis Houllevigue. xii and 304 pp. Armand Colin, Paris, 1911. F. 3.50. 7½ x 5.

The present writer is glad that the boundaries of our science are hazy if it brings books like this to his table. He must confess, however, that it concerns itself rather with cosmogony and physics than geography. But since 1885, when Miss Clerke's History of Astronomy in the Nineteenth Century appeared, there has come to his hands no such charming account of recent scientific progress.

The chapters on the Synthesis of Light and Wireless Telegraphy are admirable. "The work accomplished belongs to three of the brightest geniuses humanity has possessed, Faraday, Maxwell and Hertz. To-day we can see it in its completeness with its twofold scientific and practical crowning: the synthesis of light and wireless telegraphy" (p. 131). This synthesis of light is not quite what we of an older generation would suppose. Octaves have been borrowed for us from acoustics to think of light waves. The higher ray has half the wave length of the lower. Starting with a ten thousandth of a millimeter, two such octaves cover the tiny wave-lengths of the ultra-violet rays, a third all visible light, then six the invisible rays of heat when we encounter a gap of six octaves more. Below this gap we find the electric waves of Lampa and of Hertz from the sixteenth to the nineteenth octaves, the carriers of the "wireless." A giant Ruhmkorff coil can generate waves of six meters length; Lampa's tiny coil, of the size of a sewing machine bobbin, waves of four millimeters. We are prepared to find the agitation of the ultra-microscopic electrons generating the almost infinitely short waves of light.

They are grave matters that the author handles lightly. Eighteen brief lines picture Rutherford's magnetic detector (p. 185). Another twenty-five include both history and account of the Lodge coherer. No diagrams are used. He is a literary man, showing principles, not mechanisms. The grace of treatment reminds a reader of Miss Clerke, though he misses her fuller bits of biography.

Ultra-violet rays (p. 119) produce ozone from air. "Chemists regard the molecule of oxygen as formed by the marriage of two atoms of oxygen. This union, for the most part peaceful enough, is troubled by the addition of a third atom of oxygen; these three atoms of oxygen, in forced companionship, constitute ozone. Ozone is exasperated Oxygen." Svante Arrhenius is told in this connection that a space filled with ultra-violet light would be deadly to any spores that attempted the voyage between planets. We have long recognized in our atmosphere a shield from the incessant bombarding of meteoric grains. Here we learn of it as no less a shelter from the fatal ultra-violet rays.

A chapter of most timely interest is on the flight of birds. The most geographic chapters, principles of meteorology and forecasting the weather, have less of special interest. Guilbert's method of forecasting the paths of cyclones by studying the surface winds is a good feature, not only for its intrinsic interest but also for the admirable way in which it is described. At this point are inserted the only diagrams in the book. "Men say of meteorology, if it is a science, what is it good for? What does it do?" The author answers. "It gathers data and takes *means!* If it did not rain as predicted at least there were sixty-five chances in a hundred that it would!" The reference to the Gulf Stream is less happy.

Altogether it is a delightful volume of essays of astonishing clearness. If these notes on it lack unity, so does the book. But if its nine chapters are loosely connected, perhaps some of them attain a higher interest than can be long maintained.

MARK JEFFERSON.

The Evolution of Plants. By Dukinfield Henry Scott. 239 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. Henry Holt & Company, New York, 1911. 75 cents. 7 x 5.

This is a book of the Home University Library of Modern Knowledge series and is advertised as "the story of the development of flowering plants, from the earliest geological times, unlocked from technical language." The book is not, however, a popular treatise. It opens with a statement of the Darwinian theory of natural selection as a cause of evolution and, with this as an assumption, proceeds to trace, through the geological history as it is recorded in the fossils, the course which plants in their evolution have followed. A selection of groups of plants is made for treatment, so that the scope of the book is limited to the fossil evidences of the flowering plants, the seed plants and the higher spore plants. By the use of these groups a somewhat logical connection is made with the first known plants of the paleontological series to the highest types of the present. The flowering plants are traced back to the highly organized Mesozoic seed plants, and the seed plants in turn are traced back to the spore plants of the Paleozoic period. No attempt is made to suppress the difficulties in the acceptance of the evidence and the book in its clear presentation of the present status makes a strong plea for further investigation.

ROBERT M. BROWN.